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GORBACHEV'S EURASIAN STRATEGY: THE DANGERS OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE

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↑ "There is great disorder under heaven, and the situation is excellent," goes the Chinese version of dialectics. Four years and countless surprises after his ascendance to power, there is now little doubt that Mikhail Gorbachev aims to modernize Soviet society and to de-ideologize Moscow's foreign relations. Clearly, the world has been dazzled by the brutal candor with which the Soviets have exposed the systemic crisis of communism and the stunning scope and pace of Gorbachev's "new thinking." Too dazzled, perhaps.

Glaringly absent from the normative debate about perestroika is a sober assessment of how "new thinking" contributes to the attainment of Soviet strategic objectives or whether the path of Soviet foreign policy will, as widely assumed, lead to a more stable world. Indeed, as the pace of reform in the Soviet Union quickens, the American debate on its meaning is becoming curiously sluggish. In short, is the situation excellent, or merely disorderly? (7)

Where Gorbachev takes perestroika, and how he reconciles his radical agenda with Marxism-Leninism, remains to be seen. In a largely overlooked speech last January, Gorbachev himself conceded that beyond having "marked out the contours" of perestroika, he was largely improvising: "I do not intend to persuade you that we have a theory and policy of restructuring which has been completely worked out in detail... even less do I intend to state that we have a complete picture of the society toward which we are proceeding."¹

The same may be said for what the Japanese call Gorbachev's "smile diplomacy." But the complementarity between Soviet objectives in Europe and Asia suggests that Gorbachev has a clearer idea of what he would like to achieve in foreign relations. Close scrutiny reveals a remarkable symmetry between Gorbachev's Asian and European policies, and suggests that what may appear to be discrete and unrelated initiatives

¹See *Pravda*, January 9, 1989.

are really tactical elements of a coherent Eurasian strategy which is intended to serve two major objectives.

The immediate aim of Gorbachev's strategy is to immobilize the West at a time when the Soviet Union seeks a breathing space (*peredyshka*) to revive its deteriorating economy. The longer-term objective is to establish a new *modus vivendi* with the United States and its allies in traditional power-political terms. The de-ideologization of Soviet foreign policy is the necessary precondition for establishing the New Diplomacy, which, in turn, will lead to a new spheres of influence arrangement, or a new Yalta.

NEW THINKING AND SOVIET STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Viewed within the context of a Eurasian strategy, the utility of Gorbachev's "new thinking" as a means to attain broader objectives becomes readily apparent. The first step in Moscow's post-Brezhnev reassessment was the devaluation of the Third World in the calculus of Soviet interests. Evident in the writings of prominent Soviet analysts such as Karen Brutents (now in charge of Third World policy for the International Department) since the late 1970s, this element of new thinking began to percolate up to the Politburo during Andropov's brief tenure.²

Compelled by the burden of empire, and the demonstrable failure of virtually all Soviet Third World clients acquired during the Brezhnev period (most dramatically in Afghanistan) to achieve either economic viability or political dynamism, Gorbachev has taken new thinking several steps further. The perception that a variety of political, cultural, religious, and ethnic factors impeded the development of socialism in developing societies underlies the notion of "mutual security" and the Soviet call for "national reconciliation" in Third World conflicts. It also helps to explain the notion of burgeoning multipolarity articulated by Aleksandr Yakovlev, the shift in emphasis from "national liberation movements" to ascending regional powers--Brazil, Indonesia, Thailand, Egypt, India--whose interests are perceived to be in conflict with those of the West (e.g., Latin American debt and East Asian trade). The effect of this aspect of new thinking is to remove much of the less developed world from the locus of strategic competition as long as Moscow's international prestige as a broker of regional disputes (in the Middle East, the Gulf, southern Africa, and Indochina) is preserved.

²See Francis Fukuyama, *Moscow's Post-Brezhnev Reassessment of the Third World*, The RAND Corporation, R-3337-USDP, February 1986.



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The aim of Gorbachev's strategy in the Eurasian rimland is two-fold. First, through the combination of public diplomacy and carefully timed arms control initiatives, he seeks to drive a wedge between the United States and its allies by feeding West European perceptions of a diminishing Soviet threat. Second, through increased trade, investment, credits, and technology transfer, he hopes to enlist outside support in the modernization of Soviet society from the major European states (West Germany, France, Italy, and the UK) and from Japan and the newly industrializing countries (NICs) in Asia.

The tactical elements of Gorbachev's foreign policy strategy in Europe and Asia are political cooptation, neutralization of adversaries, and economic cooperation. The successful implementation of these elements, which follow in logical sequence, is intended to meet the objectives of geostrategic retrenchment and realignment, which, in turn will facilitate the goal of revitalizing Soviet global influence in the 21st century.

Evolving Eurasian Strategy

In order to have any hope of influencing countries from which the Soviet Union has been estranged, Gorbachev first had to demonstrate that the confrontational, indeed militarized, foreign policy of the Brezhnev era was a relic of "old thinking." The central concepts of new thinking--"mutual security", "reasonable sufficiency", and "socialist pluralism"-- are designed to alter Moscow's "enemy" image and thus to facilitate Soviet integration into the global political system. Eradicating the "'enemy image' on whose demolition we are now expending so much effort," as Shevardnadze conceded in a speech at a Foreign Ministry conference last July, is a necessary precondition to create a new political environment conducive to the success of Gorbachev's myriad initiatives.³

³"Formula of Modern Diplomacy" speech July 25, 1988 at Soviet Foreign Ministry conference, *Augumenty I Fakty*, September 8, 1988.

In trumpeting the theme of mutual security, Gorbachev is trading on the idea of "security for all" advanced by the late Swedish Prime Minister Olaf Palme and by the European peace commission which bore his name. The concept of mutual security, which animates Gorbachev's arms control agenda, goes to the heart of the issue that divides Europe.

Reasonable sufficiency is both the precursor to and byproduct of mutual security. The planned unilateral reductions of Soviet tanks and troops from Eastern Europe is intended to substantiate Gorbachev's rhetoric of sufficiency and thus to set into motion a process of mutual East-West reductions putatively aimed at enhancing the common security of all states.⁴

The utility of the socialist pluralism idea is manifold. It is an implicit admission that state socialism has been a failed exemplar of socioeconomic development. The acknowledgement that many roads lead to socialism has also helped to dispel the repressive, doctrinaire image of the Soviet Union symbolized by the Brezhnev Doctrine. It further underscores the reformist view of Soviet perestroischiki that a nation's performance rather than its adherence to dogma is the real yardstick of success in the socialist world.

Gorbachev has repeated the notion that unity does not mean uniformity on numerous occasions. The joint declaration issued at the end of his visit to Yugoslavia in March 1988 renounced "any threat and use of force and interference in the internal affairs of other states under any pretext whatsoever." He declared in his UN speech: "Freedom of choice is a universal principle that should allow no exceptions." And in his July 6, 1989 address to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, Gorbachev stated that "any interference in domestic affairs and any attempts to restrict the sovereignty of states--friends, allies or any others--are inadmissible." Perhaps the most telling evidence of Moscow's commitment to socialist pluralism is the calm with which it has

⁴See R. Jeffrey Smith, *The Washington Post*, August 1, 1988, p. 1 for debate on Soviet military doctrine. For an exhaustive discussion of the various strands in Soviet military thinking, see Raymond Garthoff, "New Thinking in Soviet Military Doctrine," *Washington Quarterly*, Summer 1988, pp. 131-58.

responded thus far to the formation of a non-communist government in Poland.

By granting the East European states--and by extension all Soviet clients--a license to pursue their own version of modernization and reform, Gorbachev hopes to transform economic liabilities into political assets, thereby rationalizing Moscow's external empire. At the same time, he still has not formally repudiated the Brezhnev Doctrine. "To threaten the socialist system, to try to undermine it from the outside and wrench a country away from the socialist community," he stated at the Polish Party Congress in June 1986, would "encroach" on the postwar arrangement. Similarly, in a May 1988 interview with the Washington Post, he defended the Soviet interventions in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, noting that such actions were precipitated by "another kind of interference" (i.e. Western).

Even his Strasbourg speech made no direct reference to the Brezhnev Doctrine. Indeed, while contending that "the all-European home excludes the probability of armed confrontation," Gorbachev challenged Bush's conception of a politically and socially unified Europe. Many people in the West believe that "overcoming the split of Europe implies the 'overcoming of socialism,'" he pointed out. "But this is a course for confrontation [sic] if not something worse."

"Unity in diversity," then, is acceptable only insofar as the Communist Party or its surrogate and the Warsaw Pact retain their dominant roles in Eastern Europe. Whether these conflicting currents of Soviet new thinking can be reconciled remains to be seen. Gorbachev is in a race against time: He is calculating that new thinking will produce new security and economic arrangements in Europe before the satellite states leave the Soviet orbit.

The European Charm Offensive

Making a virtue out of the necessity for retrenchment, Gorbachev has aggressively pursued a sweeping disarmament agenda. Beginning on January 15, 1986, when he called for a nuclear-free world by the year 2000, Gorbachev launched a political campaign aimed at transcending the

zero-sum diplomacy of bipolarism. In Gorbachev's view, the continued development of nuclear weapons and the emerging technologies in conventional arms have rendered the Cold War obsolete. It was in the common interest of the super-powers and all other states to surmount social and political differences and to coexist peacefully in a world that is growing economically, technologically, and ecologically more interdependent.

Despite the understandable skepticism aroused by such lofty rhetoric, Gorbachev tirelessly repeated the refrain of mutual security, interdependence and peaceful coexistence at the 27th. Communist Party Congress in February 1986, during the run-up to the Reykjavik summit in October of that year, and in the pages of *Perestroika*, the best-selling popularization of Gorbachev's "new thinking" that appeared in the fall of 1987. During the past eighteen months, Gorbachev's rhetoric has become more refined and focussed. In what is thus far the most comprehensive statement of his *Weltanschauung*, Gorbachev pledged in his December 1988 UN speech to reduce substantially Soviet forces in Europe and Asia, reconfigure the balance in a defensive mode, renew Moscow's commitment to the Helsinki process, and institutionalize the rule of law in the USSR.

While such transcendental diplomacy addresses a global audience, its prime targets are the U.S., Europe and Asia, where it seeks to induce specific outcomes. Gorbachev's European and Asian speeches leave little doubt as to the importance of the United States in facilitating the implementation of Soviet strategy in both regions. The renewal of detente is necessary to reduce the superpower arms race, thereby creating a political environment that will be conducive to reducing the security threat to the Soviet Union along the Eurasian rimland and to developing more cooperative economic ties with both Europe and Asia.

EUROSEDUCTION

Western governments and publics have reacted enthusiastically to the Gorbachev phenomenon. Not all West European leaders subscribe unreservedly to West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher's view that Gorbachev represents an "historic opportunity" to improve East-West relations, but they agree with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher that he is someone with whom they can do business. Western opinion polls, including those in the United States, consistently reveal the perception that Moscow is sincere in its stated desire to establish peaceful relations with the West. A poll in conservative Orange County, California in January 1989 gave Gorbachev a higher favorable rating than President George Bush. Moreover, nearly half the respondents stated that the Cold War is ending, a view that Gorbachev has cultivated, and that Japan and the Third World represent greater threats to America's future than does the Soviet Union.⁵

Three themes have captured the imagination of European audiences, East and West. One is the notion of mutual security or comprehensive security, in its global form. Soviet references to the indivisibility of security resonate powerfully in Western Europe, where public opposition to the continuing military competition between the superpowers, the success of INF notwithstanding, has increased over the past decade. They have almost talismanic power in West Germany, particularly but by no means exclusively among Social Democrats.⁶

Even more tantalizing to European audiences is Gorbachev's pronouncement that human interests must take precedence over class interests. Although "a class-motivated approach to all phenomena of social life is the ABC of Marxism," Gorbachev stated in *Perestroika*, "the threat of universal destruction" imposed an objective limit to class conflict. Economic, political, and ideological competition accordingly "must be kept within a framework of peaceful competition which necessarily envisages cooperation."⁷

⁵See Robert Scheer, "Gorbachev Outpolls Bush in Orange County," *The Los Angeles Times*, January 23, 1989, p. 1.

⁶Hugh De Santis, "After INF: The Political-Military Landscape of Europe," *Washington Quarterly*, Summer 1988, pp. 24-44.

⁷Mikhail S. Gorbachev, *Perestroika*, Harper & Row, 1987, pp. 146-148.

Mutual security and the development of human versus class interests would only make Europe the "protagonist of its own history," however, if there were a "common European house." This theme, introduced by Gorbachev during his visit to Prague in the spring of 1987, has become the main public relations staple in the Soviet approach to Europe. "Dialectics aside," noted Yevgeniy Primakov, director of the World Economics and International Relations Institute, "Europe remains an organic whole. It has its own history, its own culture, its own civilization, of which we are all a part." Not only is Gorbachev de-ideologizing foreign policy, he is also articulating Moscow's apparent desire to rejoin the community of nations it abandoned in 1917, an objective that has underlain European diplomacy since the days of Lloyd George.

Europe from the Atlantic-to-Urals, a theme borrowed from Charles de Gaulle," is a cultural-historical entity by the common heritage of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment," Gorbachev explained in *Perestroika*. There may be different apartments and entrances to those apartments, he argued, but the house is common, a position, Gorbachev noted, that Genscher and Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti embraced. Even the French, who otherwise view skeptically Gorbachev's disingenuous disclaimer that the common home idea is not intended to sow dissension between the United States and Europe, share this attitude. "It is perhaps one of the objectives of the Soviet leaders," President Francois Mitterand recently stated on French television, "to achieve this separation between the American continent and the rest of Europe...but it is also quite a desirable objective. The common home does exist...a common home is a good thing, we must build it."⁸

⁸FBIS-Soviet Union, April 2, 1986, p. AA-7; also see FBIS-Eastern Europe, pp. D1-2.

The Asian Factor

Building a common home poses a more formidable challenge in Asia, which lacks the common history and culture that binds the European states. Geographically larger, lacking the multilateral economic and political/military structures that exist in Europe, and complicated by the presence of three major powers and by multiple national rivalries that transcend ideology, a common Asian home does not exist. Moreover, the militarized, coercive Asia policy inherited by Gorbachev polarized the region. The Soviet military buildup in the Pacific estranged relations between Moscow and Tokyo and helped to strengthen Japan's strategic alliance with the United States during the 1980s. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and Moscow's support of Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia exacerbated strains with China, which tilted towards the United States, and isolated Moscow from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Nonetheless, while Asia lacks a "common home," there is, in Gorbachev's words, a "Pacific community" from which one could form a multilateral forum that would be dedicated to the elimination of the same militarized entities that have inhibited more cooperative relations in Europe. Indeed, the "Pacific community" reference, which appeared in a government statement published in Pravda, predates the "common European home" rhetoric which it otherwise parallels. There is the same emphasis on interdependence, nuclear-free zones, mutual security, and good neighborliness in spite of differing social systems.⁹

Similarly, the complex political/military relationships in the Asia/Pacific region preclude the development of Helsinki-type cooperation and security arrangements. Still, this did not stop Gorbachev from advocating precisely such a process in the Pacific. Given the "militarized 'triangle' of Washington, Tokyo, and Seoul," it is urgent, he stated in his benchmark Vladivostok speech of July 1986, to begin "integrating the Asia-Pacific region into the general process of establishing a comprehensive system of international security." As

⁹Pravda, April 24, 1986.

for the venue, Gorbachev suggested (without consulting Tokyo) Hiroshima: "Why shouldn't that city," he asked, "become the 'Helsinki of sorts' for Asia and the Pacific ocean?"¹⁰

Gorbachev's Helsinki collective security idea fell on deaf ears in Asia. The combination of complex geopolitical realities and Asian skepticism about Soviet intentions led Gorbachev gradually to backpeddle on the Helsinki concept. By his September 1988 speech in Krasnoyarsk, the idea was discarded and replaced by more modest proposals for regional talks on Asian security issues between the United States, the USSR, and China as permanent members of the UN Security Council.

One consistent tactic is the call for nuclear-free zones (NFZs), often in tandem with references to the Delhi Declaration on the Principles for a Nuclear-Weapons Free and Non-Violent World, which was signed by Gorbachev and Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in November 1986. Gorbachev was quick to endorse the Treaty of Rarotonga, which created a South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone, and to advocate, at Vladivostok, a nuclear-free Korean peninsula. He has repeatedly called for a NFZ in the Indian Ocean, extended his support on behalf of ASEAN efforts to create a Southeast Asian nuclear-free zone, and suggested antisubmarine warfare-free zones (ASW) in the Pacific. All of the proposed NFZs share two features in common. First, they are in areas where there is little or no Soviet presence. Second, they would impede U.S. force projection capabilities.

EURASIAN SYMMETRY

The tactics of cooptation, however, have succeeded in cultivating a psychological predisposition among Moscow's adversaries to view Soviet new thinking as more than a propaganda ploy. In both Europe and Asia, the Soviets have punctuated bold demarches with visible concessions of important political and strategic consequence.

¹⁰For the text of Gorbachev's July 28, 1986 speech in Vladivostok, see *FBIS-Soviet Union*, July 29, 1986, pp. R1-R20.

In Europe, the concrete manifestation of new thinking was, until December 1988, limited to the double-zero INF agreement. Since then, Gorbachev has both pledged unilateral arms reductions and proposed detailed measures to reduce offensive conventional forces in both European alliances. In addition, the Warsaw Pact has made important concessions toward satisfying NATO's position on conventional forces.

In Asia, in addition to including SS-20s east of the Urals in the INF accord, the Soviets have withdrawn from Afghanistan, removed four of the five divisions in Mongolia, made border concessions to China, and pressured Vietnam to withdraw its forces from Cambodia. Gorbachev's approach has improved relations with the ASEAN countries, especially Thailand, and transformed what had been incremental movement towards Sino-Soviet detente since 1982 into a fullblown rapprochement which may reshape the political landscape of Asia.

Unquestionably, Moscow's initiatives on the reduction of conventional arms in Europe have generated far greater interest in the West. Gorbachev, of course, had publicly expressed his interest in conventional arms cuts long before the consummation of the INF treaty. In May 1986 (roughly about the time Gorbachev was contemplating his Vladivostok speech on Asia), the Warsaw Pact's Consultative Committee issued a document, the so-called Budapest Appeal, urging cuts of 25 percent in NATO and Pact forces by the early 1990s. A year later, as Western Europe was ironically heaping praise on Gorbachev for the zero-INF agreement that NATO had proposed in 1979, the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies proposed a three-tiered approach to conventional reductions that included a data exchange, the elimination of asymmetries on both sides, and reductions of 500,000 troops in both alliances, leading to a defensive realignment of forces.

As was the case with INF, the United States, and to a lesser degree, its European allies, responded circumspectly to the Soviet proposals. Given the Soviet refusal to provide an accurate accounting of Pact forces in the long-suffering MBFR talks, Moscow's proposed data exchange seemed spurious. Furthermore, equal reductions would hardly reduce the disparity of forces in Europe that favored the East. So

Gorbachev upped the ante, making another offer the West could not refuse. With his flair for the histrionic, he chose the anniversary of Pearl Harbor to announce in his UN address the unilateral reduction of 500,000 troops by 1990, including six tank divisions numbering some 5000 tanks and 50,000 troops from Eastern Europe. To make the extraordinary Soviet offer even more amazing, each of Moscow's Warsaw Pact allies announced cuts of their own shortly thereafter.¹¹

To be sure, the caution with which the United States and some allied capitals greeted the Gorbachev proposal was understandable: What is unilaterally given can be unilaterally taken away, especially when the donor is the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, the breadth and specificity of the Soviet proposal, reified by the first tranche of tank and troop reductions from Eastern Europe, eased Western suspicions and nurtured the view that Europe is on the verge of transformation to a post-Yalta order. More important, Gorbachev's unilateral move showed signs of neutralizing Moscow's adversaries. After considerable transatlantic wrangling, the United States ultimately acceded to West German pressure and agreed to postpone the decision to modernize short-range nuclear missiles stationed in the FRG.

Meanwhile, away from the public battle for the hearts and minds of Europe, negotiations at the conventional arms talks in Vienna were making remarkable progress. In March, Shevardnadze outlined a three-stage proposal advocating the reduction of NATO and Warsaw Pact troop levels and arms by 35 percent over the next 5-6 years and the conversion of the remaining forces to a "defensive character." The West hailed the Soviet offer, which seemed to provide "a real sense of hope that we can put the 40-year Cold War behind us," in the words of British Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe. The Soviets also drew closer to the basic framework of the Western position. By May they had agreed on the categories of weapons to be included in an arms accord and on NATO's

¹¹See Andre Fontaine, *Le Monde*, March 4, 1987, in *FBIS-Western Europe*, March 6, 1987, pp. K1-K2. For a careful analysis of the offer and its implications, see Philip A. Karber, "The Military Impact of the Gorbachev Reductions," *Armed Forces International*, January 1989, pp. 54-64.

proposed limits of 20,000 tanks, 28,000 armored personnel carriers, and 16,500 to 24,000 artillery pieces.

Then President Bush launched his own peace initiative, which went far beyond NATO's earlier modest proposal. On May 29, the President opened the summit conference marking the 40th anniversary of NATO with a four-point initiative that "locked in" the Pact's acceptance of weapons ceilings and called for cuts in U.S. and Soviet manpower in Europe to 275,000 and a 15 percent reduction in helicopters and combat aircraft.¹²

The proposals on aircraft, which Secretary of State James Baker III spelled out in July, and on manpower are likely to prove problematic to Moscow. The Soviets would be forced to reduce combat aircraft by some 40 percent to meet the NATO ceiling of 5700. They are likely to be reluctant to accept a 10-to-1 reduction in manpower unless it were accompanied by cuts in other Western forces in the FRG, including the Bundeswehr. Nonetheless, the outlines of an agreement are visible, although not within the President's 6-12 month timetable, and there seems to be considerable willingness in both alliances to compromise their differences.¹³

The Soviet approach in Asia was also evolving. There, too, Gorbachev realized that the rhetoric of peace would not really alter the perceptions of Moscow's adversaries unless Soviet behavior corresponded to its rhetoric. The aborted Reykjavik summit provided the impetus for Moscow's actions. In July 1987, after having delinked INF from his efforts to constrain the Strategic Defense Initiative and having extended the zero option to include missiles with a range of 500 km and beyond, Gorbachev agreed to remove all intermediate- and shorter-range missiles from Asia.

¹² Doyle McManus and William Touhy, "NATO, Soviet Bloc Call for Major Arms cuts, *The Los Angeles Times*, March 7, 1989, p. 1. Michael R. Gordon, "Moscow Backs U.S. Troop Cuts in Europe," *New York Times*, May 25, 1989, pp. A1, A7; R. W. Apple, Jr., "Bush Wins Backing for His Arms Plan from Most Allies," *The New York Times*, May 30, 1989, pp. A1, A4.

¹³ Michael R. Gordon, "Conventional-Force Cuts Are Proposed by Moscow," *The New York Times*, June 30, 1989, p. A5; Thomas L. Friedman, "NATO's Proposal on Aircraft Cuts Ready, Baker Says," *The New York Times*, July 13, 1989, pp. A1, A8.

This skein of developments was important for two reasons. First, it demonstrated Gorbachev's ability to neutralize American demands, not only giving substantive content to Soviet rhetoric in Europe but also fostering a perception that his response was a Soviet initiative. Second, the proposed "global double zero" outcome, which Gorbachev announced in an interview with the Indonesian weekly "Merdeka," similarly lent credibility to new thinking in Asia. In effect, Gorbachev portrayed himself as the advocate of Asian as well as European security interests.

While the West was digesting, indeed, savoring, the outcome of the INF negotiations, Gorbachev began to launch arms control offensives in other areas. During his visit to Murmansk in early December 1987, he floated a series of proposals to restrict naval activity in northern waters, including the Baltic and North seas. In contrast to the bold moves taken in the INF talks, however, naval proposals aimed at circumscribing U.S. deployments of sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs) and anti-submarine weapons (ASW) struck observers as being inherently self-serving and disingenuous. The clear Soviet intent, noted Admiral Carlisle A. H. Trost, chief of naval operations, was to "pull the fangs out of the U.S. Navy."¹⁴ Such proposals, which have been a major feature of Soviet arms control initiatives in Asia, are transparently an effort to magnify the difference between the new-thinking Soviet Union, a land power willing to reduce its superiority of forces, and the United States, a naval power intent on maintaining its dominance in the Pacific.

In retrospect, Gorbachev's actions in Asia roughly parallel the moves he made in Europe after 1987 (which they were also intended to reinforce), particularly if one views China as the Asian strategic equivalent to West Germany in Soviet priorities. The decision to extend the INF zero option in Europe to Asia undeniably enhanced the Soviet image in the region; China and Japan had repeatedly warned against excluding the Soviet SS-20s deployed east of the Urals from the INF

¹⁴See *FBIS-Soviet Union* for Murmansk speech, October 5, 1987, pp. C8-C9; Trost quoted in *The Baltimore Sun*, June 19, 1988, p. 6.

talks. Globalizing the zero option thus had the double advantage of demonstrating sensitivity to Asian concerns and laying the political groundwork for conventional and strategic arms control in the region in the context of comprehensive security.

The most important development, however, was the announced--and subsequently completed--withdrawal of the 115,000-man force from Afghanistan by February 1989. It was, after all, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan that drove the final nail into the coffin of detente. The invasion marked the apogee of the Brezhnev era, a period of expansion and strategic buildup, and the first time the Soviets had applied the direct use of large-scale force in the Third World.

In answering Reagan's challenge to quit Afghanistan in the wrap-up of the INF talks, Gorbachev had passed a key litmus test of new thinking. To be sure, the departing Soviet troops left a messy and potentially explosive situation behind them. Nevertheless, the effect of the Soviet withdrawal in the Muslim world, and throughout Asia, can not be overestimated. Not insignificantly, it also eliminated one of Beijing's "three obstacles" to the normalization of Sino-Soviet relations.

Similar, albeit less dramatic, movement occurred on the other regional obstacle, the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia, largely as a result of Soviet pressure. Within days after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan began on May 15, 1988, Hanoi announced the removal of 50,000 troops from the territory of its war-battered neighbor by the end of that year, lending credence to the rhetoric of Soviet diplomacy, which pointed to Afghanistan as a model for the resolution of other regional conflicts, particularly Cambodia.

Movement on the final obstacle--the 53 Soviet divisions along the 4600-mile Chinese border--actually preceded the concessions on INF. In his Vladivostok speech, Gorbachev praised China's reforms, and, more important, accepted Beijing's claims with respect to the border along the Amur/Ussuri River lies. By late 1988 negotiators were approaching an accord on the eastern border, and Chinese and Soviet officials began working overtime to define the western border in time for the Sino-Soviet summit.

Resolution of the conflicting border claims--a principal factor in Moscow's buildup of the 1960s and the cause of bloody clashes with the Chinese in 1969--augur for a major drawdown of Soviet troops. In his UN speech, Gorbachev promised to cut 200,000 troops in Soviet Asia. Furthermore, assuming that the trend toward new thinking in Asia continues, reductions to pre-1964 levels (17-20 divisions) in a Sino-Soviet conventional arms agreement are a distinct possibility over the next two to four years.

New thinking and the New Diplomacy it has engendered have fared less well, on the other hand, in Northeast Asia. This is partly the result of the region's complex historical and geopolitical realities. To cite the most obvious case, Gorbachev has continued to reject Japan's claim to four Soviet-controlled islands, the Northern Territories, the sine qua non to improved bilateral relations. The absence of diplomatic gains in the North, however, is mainly ascribable to Gorbachev's continuation of the Brezhnev-era policies, including the modernization of Soviet air and naval forces in the Pacific.

Under Gorbachev's leadership, the Soviet Union has substantially improved its military position in the Pacific. Since 1985, the Soviet Pacific fleet has deployed three Sovremeny-class guided-missile destroyers and equipped some attack submarines with SLCMs; the deployment of Typhoon-class submarines and the addition of Delta-IV class boats have upgraded the capabilities of its missile forces. As for its air forces, the Mig-29 (Fulcrum) and Mig-31 (Foxybat), along with the Backfire bomber and 40 new TU-95 Bear-H bombers with long-range cruise missiles, comprise a formidable threat. North Korea, of course, is the key recipient of Soviet military largesse. Gorbachev has deepened the Soviet-North Korean strategic relationship. Moscow has provided Pyongyang with Mig-23s and SA-3 and SA-5 surface-to-air missiles, and has begun making portcalls and engaging in joint military exercises with North Korean forces.

At the same time, Soviet arms control initiatives have been at best modest efforts to establish some military transparency in the region (e.g., advance notification of exercises, limits on the scale and

frequency of exercises, a freeze on new deployments) and at worst self-serving. The clear intent of the array of initiatives for NFZs, curbs on anti-submarine warfare, and the retreat from the bases at Cam Ranh Bay and Subic Bay, is to cripple U.S. naval operations in the region.

Moscow's objective of circumscribing U.S. naval force projection in Asia parallels Soviet strategy in Europe. Soviet officials have continuously criticized NATO for excluding naval forces from the negotiations on conventional forces in Europe (CFE). Indeed, the naval reductions theme appears to be a decidedly Eurasian one, as Soviet officials have drawn a direct connection between conventional cuts in Europe and naval reductions in Asia.

Such linkage was most clearly described by Marshal Akhromeyev in September 1988. In a lengthy essay in *Pravda*, Akhromeyev challenged the American argument that naval cuts are unacceptable because the United States is primarily a maritime power, while the Soviet Union is mainly a land power. "How would the U.S. react to similar logic from the Soviets, Akhromeyev queried, "in relation, say, to the combat strength of the armored forces?" The implication is that if the Soviet Union is prepared to make asymmetrical cuts of its ground forces, the United States should reciprocate by paring its naval forces.

During a recent visit to Washington, Akhromeyev appeared to toughen the ground forces-naval linkage argument. "Reaching final agreement on radical cuts of armed forces in Europe and making them defensively oriented would remain in doubt," he said in unprecedented testimony before Congress, "without initiating the talks on naval cuts." Emphasizing that naval reductions "are a major prerequisite for further improvement of Soviet-American relations," Akhromeyev went so far as to suggest that Moscow might put 100 submarines in storage if the United States were to mothball 5 or 6 aircraft carriers. In the same vein, Col. Gen. Nikolai Chervov, head of the arms control directorate of the Soviet General Staff, recently proposed a ban on nuclear cruise missiles.¹⁵

¹⁵R. Jeffrey Smith, "Soviet Urges Ban on Naval Cruise Missiles," *The Washington Post*, July 14, 1989, pp. A1, A28; Michael R. Gordon, "Moscow Seeking U.S. Naval Cutbacks, Soviet Marshal Says," *The New York Times*, p. A4.

Such logic has little resonance in Washington. Nonetheless, Gorbachev has managed to alter threat perceptions to some degree in Asia, notably in China. In a way, China may be seen as the Asian analogue to West Germany in Europe. Just as closer ties between Moscow and Bonn would surely weaken Western security cohesion, the growing rapprochement with the PRC could fragment the would-be coalition of forces arrayed against the Soviet Union in Asia.

THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION

The other side of Gorbachev's efforts to Finlandize Western Europe and dilute the anti-Soviet coalition in the Pacific is an equally calculated effort to foster more cooperative economic relations with the European Community (EC) and Japan and the Asian NICs (particularly South Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan). The infusion of foreign investment, technology, and management expertise is critical to the revitalization of the Soviet economy, and part of the process of integrating the USSR and its allies into the world trading and financial system.

Western leaders have hardly responded indifferently to the economic changes that are taking place in the East. Last year the FRG, Italy, France, and the UK extended a \$6 billion line of credit to the Soviet Union. "We don't want to use our economic power to weaken our neighbors in the East," Genscher pointed out; "we see their economic development as an opportunity for us." Spurred by the Thatcher government, consortia planning is intensifying in the UK, as is the case elsewhere in Western Europe and in the United States, to facilitate participation in larger joint ventures.¹⁶ In fact, Western companies are climbing over one another to position themselves for the anticipated benefits of economic reform. Laws liberalizing joint ventures in the Soviet Union, Hungary, Poland, and even Czechoslovakia have generated a staggering number of agreements. A reported 650 joint ventures will be signed with

¹⁶Robert J. McCartney, "Soviets Get W. German Credit Line," *The Washington Post*, May 10, 1988, pp. A1, A16; Peter Montagnon, "UK Groups Plan Consortia in Bid to Boost Soviet Trade," *The Financial Times*, February 10, 1989, p. 6, 16.

the Soviet Union alone by the end of 1989. Five European banks recently formed the International Bank of Moscow to lend to companies who seek to do business there.¹⁷

The Soviet Union doubtless also hopes that Western economic aid will ease the plight of its socialist allies. Even East Germany, the communist world's touted success story, is suffering from aging plants, quality control problems, material shortages, and competition from the Asian NICs. Moscow's inability to assist the economically beleaguered East European states was a powerful factor in CEMA's decision last June to establish diplomatic relations with the EC and thereby end its 31-year estrangement from the West.¹⁸ Not surprisingly, Poland and Hungary, the most indebted and reform-minded of the East European states (Yugoslavia excepted) have been the most active in improving ties with the West. Saddled with a \$40 billion debt, Poland is attempting to liquidate the black market and make the zloty a convertible currency by the mid-1990s. Hungary, whose indebtedness is approaching \$20 billion, has already approved a law permitting foreign firms to acquire Hungarian businesses through stock purchases. Hungary has Western-style banks, a stock market, and the only personal income tax in the Soviet Bloc. Moreover, it is seriously exploring membership in the European Free Trade Association, comprised mainly of European neutrals. Such a step could give Hungary the same indirect access to the European market that East Germany enjoys through its special relationship with the FRG.¹⁹

The Soviet Union and its East European allies, however, have not focussed their economic attention solely on Western Europe. As was evident in Gorbachev's effusive praise for Japan's economic achievements at Vladivostok, Moscow has begun to articulate a new vision of integrating the Soviet Far East into the dynamic economy of the Pacific

¹⁷See Steven Greenhouse, "New Lure of Eastern Europe," *New York Times*, May 29, 1989, pp. E1, E26.

¹⁸Ferdinand Protzman, "East Germany Losing its Edge," *The New York Times*, May 15, 1989, pp. C1, C8.

¹⁹"Towards a Less Dotty Zloty," *The Economist*, February 18, 1989, p. 83; Jackson Diehl, "Hungary Moves Towards Closer Ties to West," *The Washington Post*, July 4, 1988, pp. A12, A13; and "Hungary Faces Hard Choices on Reforms," December 6, 1988, A. 35.

Rim through the creation of special economic zones. Gorbachev even mused that Vladivostok might eventually become a center of international commerce. It has enjoyed the most success with China, with which trade might reach the agreed target of \$14 billion for the five-year period ending in 1990. Cross-border trade is steadily increasing (\$274 million in 1988), and the export of some ten thousand Chinese workers to Siberia and completion of the railway linking Xinjiang province and Khazakstan promise new dimensions of commerce.

Gorbachev has been far less successful with Japan. While there has been an increase of high-profile Japanese business delegations in Moscow and in the Far East, the level of Soviet-Japanese trade in 1988 was only marginally higher than that of 1982. Clearly, Japan has held economic arrangements hostage to resolution of the Northern Territories issue. The absence of sufficient economic incentives, however, is also a factor. According to one probably not apochryphal account, a Japanese businessman who had just completed a tour of a Soviet plant in Khabarovsk was asked by his factory hosts how long it would take the Soviet Union to catch up to Japanese industry: "Forever!" he replied.

Japan's standoffish attitude has been offset by the "Nordpolitik" of South Korea's Roh Tae Woo. Reciprocal trade offices have been established in Seoul and Moscow, and a direct trade relationship has begun. Should Gorbachev decide to use foreign credits to purchase large amounts of consumer goods, South Korea could fill the bill. Moscow has also encouraged the East Europeans to develop closer ties with South Korea. On the eve of the 1988 Seoul Olympics, Hungary, in a move coordinated with Moscow, became the first Council for Mutual Economic Security (CEMA) state to establish full diplomatic relations with South Korea.

Wither Perestroika?

Gorbachev is in a race against time. His reforms have yet to produce concrete results. Perestroika remains essentially a promissory note. Will the promissory note buy sufficient time and outside economic assistance to sustain structural reform in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe before the convergence of rising expectations and the absence of progress undermine the socialist system? In domestic and foreign policy, Gorbachev's policies are propelling the Soviet Union in a direction which could either suspend or derail the reform agenda. Domestically, political and economic reforms subvert the rationale for a one-party state. Increasing national assertiveness among the minorities threatens to disrupt the Soviet federation. In Moscow's external relations, socialist pluralism threatens to undermine the basis of the Warsaw Pact, hence, Soviet control over its external empire.

For all the hopes of change perestroika has stirred, no new system has emerged to replace the discredited Stalinist planned economy. In a sense, Gorbachev is where Ronald Reagan was when he assumed the presidency. The General Secretary has succeeded in heaping all the blame for the Soviet economic malaise on Brezhnev, as Reagan blamed Jimmy Carter for America's ills. But Reagan's policies gave rise to the longest period of uninterrupted economic growth in the postwar era. In contrast, Gorbachev is still floundering.

No one in the Soviet Union, including the most committed perestroischiki, seems to know how to effect the transition from a command economy to even a quasi-market economy without triggering massive inflation and political unrest. Those who do advocate systemic reforms are stifled. Nikolai P. Shmelev, head of the economic department at the U.S.A. and Canada Institute, has been an outspoken critic of price controls. In reaction to a recent article he wrote on the subject in *Novy Mir*, however, Gorbachev publicly criticized the adoption of any measures that contributed to unemployment. Thus price reform, de-monopolization, and ruble convertibility have been indefinitely postponed. Promised Chinese-style special economic zones are not expected to be unveiled before late 1989.²⁰

²⁰Michael Parks, "New-Style Election Altering Soviet Political Landscape, *The Los Angeles Times*, March 6, 1989, pp. 1, 12-13; Michael

Soviet economic reforms have tended to follow a "two steps forward, one step back," pattern. The policy of accelerated industrial investment that followed Gorbachev's accession to power was reversed in 1988. Major projects were cancelled, and the emphasis was shifted to consumerism. Gospriemka, the enhanced quality-control system, resulted in the rejection of up to 30 percent of factory output by 1987, but the program was then scaled back. After passing a bold law on cooperative enterprises in May 1988, Gorbachev subsequently restricted the type of businesses in which they could engage. As a recent CIA/DIA report observed, recognition that efforts to revitalize the economy were not working "has led Gorbachev to alter his basic approach to solving the country's economic problems." The most candid assessment of economic reform was offered by Gorbachev at the April 25 CPSU Plenum. "The food problem is far from solved," he said. "The housing problem is acute. There is a dearth of consumer goods. The list of shortages is growing. The state's financial position is grave." ²¹

Bureaucratic resistance, psychosocial obstacles to economic decentralization and private initiative, and the inherent risk that reform poses to party control impose formidable constraints on systemic change. There is also the ineluctable conflict between Gorbachev the visionary and Gorbachev the pragmatist, as there is within the Soviet system between the forces of change and their opponents. Soviet efforts to steer a course between these countervailing forces has led Gorbachev to pursue what might be termed "graduated" or "phased" perestroika. The experimental character of Soviet reforms tends to blur the distinction between structural adjustments and changes in the ultimate goals of the socioeconomic system.

Dobbs, "Gorbachev's Successes Mask Reform Failings," *The Washington Post*, April 30, 1989, pp. A29, A31; see also the essays, including the article by Shemelev on price reform, in *Soviet Economy*, vol. 4 (October-December 1988).

²¹For a summary of Gorbachev's flipflops, see *The Economist*, March 25, 1989, pp. 53-53; see also Gorbachev's closing speech to the Central Committee plenum in *Izvestiya*, April 27, 1989, pp. 1-2, and "The Soviet Economy in 1988: Gorbachev Changes Course," released by the Joint Economic Committee of Congress, April 22, 1989.

The most difficult impediment to systemic change, however, is the potential social and political dislocations resulting from economic reforms and their implications for the party's oligarchic control over Soviet society. Thus far, Gorbachev has confined his agenda to "sermonizing," Milovan Djilas has pointed out. "His difficulties will begin in three or four years when decentralization, privatization and self-management will confront him with the painful fact that none of these reforms can be made really effective without revamping the political profile of society." The apparat may well go along with the reforms, he noted, but "they cannot be lured or cajoled into underwriting the dissolution of the party and the destruction of their own jobs and security."²²

The fundamental question remains: Can Gorbachev devolve economic and decision-making power outside the apparat while retaining a one-party system and Russian control over increasingly restive republics? This vexing dilemma has led Gorbachev to accumulate unprecedented power as head of both the state and party even as he paradoxically counsels the importance of state-party separation to political reform. This is rationalized as necessary to overcome conservative resistance to reform and to orchestrate the transition from a totalitarian society to what is likely to evolve into a hybrid authoritarian/social welfare state along the lines of pre-Bolshevik Russia or, for that matter, some Third World countries.

The emphasis on radical political reform reflects the view that the eradication of political/bureaucratic impediments are a precondition for advancing economic objectives. Gorbachev has moved politically on two inter-related fronts: consolidating personal power and institutionalizing a new political culture. With respect to the former, the September 1988 shake-up consolidated Gorbachev's position in the Politburo, and the April 1988 purge of one-quarter of the central committee broadened his power base in the party.

²²See "Milovan Djilas on Gorbachev's Future," *The New York Times*, December 3, 1988, p. A27.

But consolidating power and programs are two separate tasks. Gorbachev saw the stunning results of the March 1989 election--the impetus for the Central committee purge--as a mandate for perestroika. "The politicization of public awareness changes the political situation in the country," Gorbachev told the party meeting last April. "The elections showed that perestroika has ceased to be a cause mostly for enthusiasts and trailblazers. We can say today that it has become a truly nationwide movement."²³

Perhaps. But they were not necessarily a mandate for the party. The presence of radicals like Sakharov and Roy Medvedev, Latvian nationalists, and populists like Boris Yeltsin, indeed of an independent-minded bloc of 'progressives', in the Congress of Deputies is at best, a mixed blessing for Gorbachev. While rejecting the idea of a multiparty system, Gorbachev has legitimized pre-pluralistic formations. At a minimum, this portends a factionalized CPSU. To preempt the trend towards a multiparty system, Gorbachev must demonstrate that elements of parliamentary checks and balances in his fledgling political/legal reforms are achievable within the framework of a one-party state.

At the same time, however, the more successful Soviet economic reforms become, the more the rationale for the party's monopoly of power is undermined. The Soviet clampdown on informal political groups is a reflection of this tension. Last April, the Supreme Soviet adopted legislation expanding emergency powers enacted in October 1988 to contain or extinguish potentially disruptive political forces. But the utility of this Brezhnevian instrument thus far has not been demonstrated in repressing nationalist aspirations.

While it may ultimately be a less nettlesome problem than that of justifying a Leninist monopoly of power, devising a new social contract with more nationalistically minded republics is unquestionably the most urgent political problem Gorbachev confronts. The use of Soviet troops to quell unrest in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia is a measure of how far glasnost has advanced beyond perestroika. Many analysts view the

²³*Izvestiya*, April 27, 1989, in *FBIS-Soviet Union*, April 27, 1989, pp. 1-2.

centrifugal forces of national assertiveness as the key to Gorbachev's undoing. Indeed, after 70 years of Bolshevism, the reality of relentless nationalist ferment is, on its face, a stark refutation of both Marx and Lenin. In most cases, however (possibly the Baltic states excepted), this may be manageable in the medium- and long-term, provided that Moscow has the foresight and political will (neither of which is thus far apparent) to devolve from a Russocentric federation to something approaching a confederation with cultural autonomy and varying degrees of home rule.

Thus far, Gorbachev's posture has been a mix of accommodation and toughmindedness. In his inaugural address at the end of May as president of the new Soviet government, Gorbachev postponed the nationwide elections planned for fall 1989 as a concession to party officials who feared that they would be removed from power. Two months later, in response to labor unrest in the Siberian and Ukrainian coal mines, he reversed himself. Unsettled by the nationalist upheavals in Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, and by the disruptive effects of people's power in China, Gorbachev, much to the relief of local party and government officials, at once promised guarantees of civil liberties and abjured as "intolerable" the efforts of "isolated persons and groups to attain their own personal or group objectives by organizing mass disorders and provoking acts of violence."²⁴

In a Soviet TV address last July, Gorbachev ascribed the turmoil in the Soviet Union to Stalinist "distortions," namely, "the expulsion of entire peoples from their lands, obliviousness to the ethnic interests of small nations." Among the consequences of such distortions, he pointed out, were "the failure to resolve many socioeconomic problems of the republics and autonomies [and] deformations in the development of the language and culture of the country's peoples." But he left undefined how local autonomy could be reconciled with national unity. Quite the contrary, he reminded the Soviet citizenry that the "social

²⁴Bill Keller, "Gorbachev Urges a Postponement of Local Voting," *The New York Times*, May 31, 1989, pp. A1, A4; and "Gorbachev Moves Up Elections," *The International Herald-Tribune*, July 25, 1989, pp. 1-2.

interests of all the republics are firmly interwoven within the framework of the union." To "break these connections," he admonished, "would be a great wrench. In the quest of something better we must not take the road of destroying what has been created and abandoning what the federation has already yielded."²⁵

Gorbachev's views are bound to raise the hackles of nationalist groups in the Baltic republics, where the claims to Soviet sovereignty based on the secret protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of 1939 (as recently acknowledged by Politburo member and Gorbachev confidant Aleksandr N. Yakovlev) are altogether specious. There the national question fails somewhere between internal and external empire. The political ascendance of nationalist groups in Estonia, Lithuania (particularly the Sajudis movement which may soon supplant the local communist party), and Latvia is close to the limits of even Gorbachev's definition of Soviet orthodoxy.

In the first major development on the nationality question, the Soviet legislature accepted "in principle" plans presented" by Estonia and Lithuania last summer to establish market-oriented economies independent of the central plan. If the Supreme Soviet approves legislation permitting the implementation of such economic autonomy, it could mark the beginning of a new social contract between Moscow and its constituent republics. The Politburo evidently has prepared a document that purportedly would grant the 15 republics broad autonomy in financial and other matters.²⁶

Nonetheless, the conflicting strains of autonomy and unity in Gorbachev's reformist enterprise could well produce an anti-perestroika reaction among conservative elements in the party. Political reform and nationalist unrest spinning out of control and/or economic failure all have the potential to provide conservative forces the pretext to unseat Gorbachev. While a return to the neo-Stalinist control of the Brezhnevian period can not be ruled out, the probability of a dramatic

²⁵See *FBIS-Soviet Union*, July 3, 1989, pp. 45-47.

²⁶ Michael Dobbs, "Kremlin Urges Local Power Shift," *The Washington Post*, August 18, 1989. p. A1, A28.

reversal of perestroika is low. And even if it were to occur, it would be short-lived. The return to a past that has already been discredited would mortgage the future. It would undermine the credibility of new thinking and preclude the attainment of Gorbachev's geostrategic objectives. Even the Ligachevs realize that there is no alternative to modernization and reform. If Gorbachev were removed, he would have to be recreated.

The End of Empire?

The other potential Achilles Heel is Eastern Europe. The reformist course Gorbachev has pursued in Eastern Europe simultaneously seeks to manage the orderly decline of Soviet hegemony in the region. It is driven by the necessity of retrenchment, or what might be termed the Brest-Litovsk imperative; the contraction of empire is the cost of building and consolidating a modern, competitive Soviet state.

The political effects of economic reform in Eastern Europe have plainly exacted a price from the Soviet Union: the decline of Communist Party domination in Poland and Hungary. In Poland, the stunning defeat of the Communist Party in the June 1989 elections turned out to be the prelude to the installation of Eastern Europe's first postwar non-communist government. Two months later, newly elected President Wojciech Jaruzelski nominated Catholic intellectual and Solidarity leader Tadeusz Mazowiecki to form a government with the United Peasant Alliance and the Democratic Alliance. Hungary has passed legislation sanctioning multiparty elections in 1990, and is moving inexorably away from Moscow and towards the West.

In both cases, the respective communist parties are yielding their monopoly of power in exchange for legitimacy and implicit guarantees that they will remain a powerful, if no longer dominant, political force at least until 1995, and probably longer. In Poland's case, the Communists are certain to be awarded the defense and interior ministries; they may also receive the foreign affairs and finance portfolios. Indeed, there seems to be a tacit understanding between the Soviet Union and the reform-minded regimes in Poland and Hungary:

Moscow is apparently willing to give Warsaw and Budapest a longer political leash as long as they neither repudiate the Communist Party or socialism nor abrogate their membership in the Warsaw Pact. Yet the very essence of the political process on which they have embarked undermines the Brezhnev Doctrine and the underlying rationale of the Warsaw Pact. If, having departed from Leninism and communist orthodoxy, both seek integration into a common European home, from whom is the Pact protecting them?

While most analysts have correctly observed that Gorbachev is trying to drive a wedge between the United States and Western Europe, he is also driving a wedge between the Soviets and Eastern Europe, a political space into which Bonn appears poised to move. Poland and Hungary are well on the road to Finlandization. To be sure, the direction in which Gorbachev is heading portends the fragmentation of the Pact. It may turn out, of course, as many analysts believe, that the economically induced course of reform Gorbachev has trimmed in Eastern Europe will collide with Soviet control over its external empire, especially if Hungary or Poland tries to leave the Soviet orbit before new European security arrangements evolved. Given the irreparable damage a Soviet intervention would do to the legitimacy of new thinking, Gorbachev would doubtless hope to avert such a calamity. Assuming, however, that the process of reform in Eastern Europe continues in tandem with arms reductions, fragmentation of the Pact--and NATO--are bound to occur.

As for NATO, the Bush administration's proposal to reduce arms and troops in Europe by 1992 has repaired the fissure in relations between the United States and its European allies opened last December by Gorbachev's announced unilateral reductions. For the time being, tensions between Bonn and Washington over the disposition of short-range missiles in the FRG have also been resolved. Nonetheless, the conclusion of a conventional arms agreement would send Gorbachev's stock in Europe soaring still higher; it would rekindle U.S.-West European differences over the transfer of technology and loans to Moscow and, even if the Soviets do not explicitly call for the third zero, missile modernization.

In Asia, the Soviets are already beginning a massive withdrawal of some 200,000 troops along the Chinese border. Further reductions to pre-1964 levels would obviously make more concrete, as did INF, the Soviet concept of comprehensive collective security. Should Moscow take steps to demilitarize Vladivostok, reduce its substantial forces on the Kamchatka Peninsula and in the Sea of Okhotsk, withdraw from Cam Ranh Bay, and reach an accommodation with Japan on the Northern Territories, Washington is likely to find its Asian allies and friends increasingly receptive to parallel cuts in U.S. air and naval deployments in the Pacific.

The combination of conventional reductions and the restructuring of forces, at least in Europe, along defensive lines will further facilitate progress toward a START agreement, the structure of which was laid out in the last year of the Reagan administration. In addition, it is likely to build interest in Europe and the United States for post-START reductions, leading to a condition of minimum deterrence, the strategic equivalent of defensive conventional defense.

The political environment created by a decrease in conventional and nuclear weapons would be conducive to increasing the flow of capital, technology, and management expertise from the West to the USSR and Eastern Europe, thereby facilitating further liberalization of Moscow's policies, including partial convertibility of the ruble, special economic zones, and price reforms. The totality of such changes would transform the nature of Soviet relations with the rest of the world; it would invalidate the ideologically driven bipolar system of international relations, and give rise to a new, multipolar global balance based on traditional power politics.

When such a transition might occur and what shape a new global system would take fall into the realm of futurology. But given the urgency of Gorbachev's reform agenda, the pace of progress in arms control, and the East-West political dialogue, a radical transformation of the international system could occur as early as 2000.

The major features of such a system, one may plausibly conjecture, include the retrenchment of the superpowers in Europe and the emergence of a more fluid Europe des patries; the development of a loose collective security structure in East Asia concealing heightened regional tensions and rivalries; and the emergence of new international actors in the Third World periphery that will intrude more assertively on the main centers of power.

Congress and the American public would welcome a reduction of America's global commitments. East and West Europeans alike would take satisfaction from the renewed control over their own affairs. Many Asian states--South Korea, Vietnam--which do not want to become too dependent on either superpower would similarly find the new order potentially conducive to their interests. Based on his rhetoric, which calls for "a balance of reason and goodwill," for "cooperation" rather than "narrow nationalist egoism," this seems to be the kind of neo-Wilsonian world system that Gorbachev envisions.²⁷

Even if trends move in this direction, however, the new balance of power in Europe and Asia, not to mention the larger international system, may be inherently less stable than the bipolar world order it replaces. Superpower domination of the international system--including, perversely, the nuclear standoff--has provided a considerable measure of stability during the past four decades. Fear of Soviet expansionism in Western Europe and the painful reality of Moscow's coercive control in Eastern Europe have suppressed national antagonisms, domestic inequities, and ethnic tensions. As a result of new thinking, however, old rivalries in Europe are beginning to resurface. In East Asia, perceived American decline has increased unease about the rise of Japan and the consequences of a modernized China; unresolved territorial disputes loom on the horizon.

In Eastern Europe, long-standing tensions between Hungary and Rumania over Transylvania have erupted; Hungary has even brought the issue before the UN. The dormant border quarrel over the Banat between

²⁷Gorbachev, *Perestroika*, p. 253.

Hungary and Yugoslavia could just as easily be rekindled. Turmoil has pervaded the separate fiefdoms that comprise Yugoslavia ever since Tito's death. Serbian designs on the autonomous provinces of Kossovo and the Vojvodina have provoked a sharp reaction from the Croatians and Slovenians. This internecine strife could spill over to ethnic kin in Albania and Bulgaria.

To the North, signs of political conflict between East Germany and Poland are emerging over Szczecin. Tensions over this Baltic port city, which was awarded to Poland in 1945, were suppressed until 1985. Since then, and particularly after the East Germans extended their territorial waters from 3 to 12 miles, strains between the GDR and Poland have increased and the navies of both countries have appeared to enforce their sovereignty. The Poles are particularly troubled by the suspicion that Bonn is quietly encouraging East German efforts to reclaim the city.²⁸

This brings us to West Germany, which would be the center of gravity in a restored Mittel Europa. No country in Europe has a greater stake in reuniting a divided continent. While contemporary West Germany cannot be compared with either its Weimar or Nazi predecessors, fears of a reunited Germany run deep in Europe. The image of a reunited, militant Germany is also the Soviet Union's worst nightmare. The unintended political effects of Gorbachev's new thinking, however, could lead, epiphenomenally, to closer ties between the two Germanys and eventual reunification in an international environment that may be institutionally incapable of assimilating such change.

The emergence of a single German state in a reconfigured Europe from which the superpowers have militarily departed and in which a host of unrequited national antagonisms arise could be a decidedly unstable environment. True, the British and the French deterrents would be available to maintain stability. Whether Britain and France would be able to maintain their arsenals at the levels they will reach after their modernization programs are completed is questionable, however,

²⁸John Tagliabue, "Struggle for Polish Port Reflects Shift in East Bloc," *The New York Times*, March 12, 1989, p. 10.

especially if the United States and the Soviet Union proceed with post-START reductions.

It is equally dubious that West Germany would indefinitely tolerate such a condition of military inequality in a reintegrated European state system in which it will assume increasing economic and political influence, particularly in Eastern Europe. Absent the comforting military presence of the United States and a sufficiently resilient political-security infrastructure to manage change, how will Germany's neighbors to the east and west react to its greater weight in the European balance? How will the Soviet Union respond to a more assertive Germany which has the capacity to develop its own nuclear deterrent?

Another potentially dysfunctional aspect of a nascent balance-of-power system of international relations is the rise of Japan as a global power. Like Germany, of course, postwar Japan hardly begs comparison of its militaristic past, a past with which it has not come fully to grips. Ever since the end of World War II, Japan has been content to let the United States assume the major responsibility for its security in the Pacific. But pressure from Congress to assume a greater defense burden, along with the reemergence of national assertiveness, have prompted Japan to reassess its place in the world. Unobtrusively and inadvertently, the world may not be heading towards 2000, but rather towards 1933.

The Asian balance, however, is far less fluid than that in Europe. Its centerpiece is the U.S.-Japanese strategic alliance, which has been qualitatively enhanced during the past decade. Japan now has more destroyers deployed than Britain, and more ASW planes in the Pacific than the United States. Moreover, it has as many aircraft to defend its territory as the United States has for its entire continental defense. Moreover, Japan is in the process of developing an SSM-1 missile and acquiring AEGIS cruisers and AWACS.²⁹

²⁹Donald S. Zagoria, "Soviet Policy in East Asia: A New Beginning?" *Foreign Affairs*, America and the World, 1988, p. 127.

To be sure, the defensive character of Japan's armed forces and the American military presence in the region have assuaged Asian fears of a revived Japanese security threat. Nevertheless, Asian concerns about Japan, like European worries about Germany, can be easily aroused. Tokyo's decision to produce the FSX fighter has generated an undertow of regional anxiety that Japan may be planning to acquire an independent military capability. Of course, Japan would prefer to continue its economic-security partnership with the United States. Certainly, it lacks the sense of mission to supplant the United States in the Pacific. Moreover, public opinion in Japan and in East Asia as a whole would not permit any alteration of Tokyo's security relationship with Washington. Indeed, Sino-Soviet rapprochement is likely to reinforce Japan's American connection. But the U.S.-Japanese relationship is under unprecedented strain. Myopic congressional demands that Japan spend more on defense and pressure on the White House for trade retaliation in accord with section 301 of the 1988 United States trade law may create a climate in which Tokyo is susceptible to Soviet initiatives.

Resolution of the Northern Territories dispute would lead to Soviet-Japanese detente. The combination of improved relations between Moscow and Tokyo, the festering burden-sharing issue, and the emergence of a more nationalistic younger generation of Japanese is certain to complicate U.S.-Japanese relations. As is the case with Germany, if the Soviets succeed in separating Japan from the United States, they will have sown the seeds for a future world environment that is likely to be far less stable than the one in which we have lived for the past four decades. In short, Gorbachev's domestic success could be the international system's failure.

A Eurasian Response

The implications of Gorbachev's Eurasian strategy for international stability should not be exaggerated; Gorbachev's overriding aim is not to force the United States off the world stage. Confronted with the economic necessity of restructuring the Soviet Union's relationship with the external world, Gorbachev seeks to create a new security framework

that will give Moscow the time to modernize and ultimately to exercise greater international influence in the year 2000 and beyond; in short, a policy of *reculer pour mieux sauter*.

Nevertheless, the novelty of Gorbachev's rhetoric and, increasingly, Soviet behavior is intellectually disorienting and politically immobilizing. It is forcing the United States and its allies to recast the cognitive map they have formed of the Soviet Union over the past seven decades. From the time the Puritan settlers arrived at the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the American view of the world has been infused with a sense of mission: Americans have self-consciously sought to spread their liberal-capitalist ideals to countries beyond their shores. Post-World War II American internationalism was similarly influenced by the missionary's commitment to transform the world--threatened by the Soviet antichrist--into a replica of the American experience. What the sinister and foreboding frontier was to the Puritans, the Soviet Union was to postwar policymakers.

Gorbachev poses a dual problem for the United States. The less the Soviet Union behaves like the trustee of a world-revolutionary crusade, the harder it will be for the United States to maintain its missionary foreign policy. On the other hand, the more the Soviet Union behaves like a nation-state, the less likely it is that the United States will be able to maintain a public consensus to participate in the grubby game of power politics.

The United States will have to resolve this psychopolitical dilemma in a more complex and interdependent world in which it, like the Soviet Union, has less influence than it once did. The principal issue facing U.S. policymakers is how to prepare for the post-Yalta world that is emerging from Gorbachev's new thinking and the international ripples it has created. Should Europe remain divided or should the United States work toward its reintegration? If the latter, does the United States need to maintain even a nuclear presence on the continent? Indeed, are conventional and strategic arms agreements likely to enhance or weaken stability in a changing international environment? If the superpowers militarily retrench from Europe, on what institutional supports should

the new continental balance of power rest? Will forward-deployed forces in the Pacific be required for the indefinite future? If so, should they be restructured to accommodate new political and security realities in the region?

The enormous potential for instability inherent in Gorbachev's Eurasian strategy and the ambiguity of Soviet objectives provide ample political space for creative diplomacy to reach new understandings, erect new mechanisms, or modify existing ones, particularly the UN system, to maximize stability. This does not require a leap of faith on the part of U.S. policymakers. The agenda articulated by Gorbachev furnishes a framework for setting benchmarks against which to evaluate Soviet behavior. These are the building blocks of a new relationship.

The onus is on the Soviets to reconfigure their forces in a defensive manner, to foster socialist pluralism, to undertake domestic economic and political reforms, and to subscribe to the conditions that will enable them to participate in the global trading and financial environment. There is no dearth of proposals on how to respond to Gorbachev. But there is no great urgency to do so. It is the Soviet Union, after all, not the United States, that is undergoing a systemic crisis. If Gorbachev acts like a man in a hurry, it is because desperation tends to focus the mind. He is painfully aware that without economic and political reforms, the Soviet Union is doomed to fall farther behind the capitalist world.

In contrast, the United States is grappling with the dilemmas of success. Containment, the promotion of an open multilateral trading system, and the reinstatement of Germany and Japan in the world political order have hugely succeeded in fostering an era of international stability and prosperity. For this very reason, the United States has become complacent about the future. At a time when rapid political change, increasing economic competition, and the diffusion of technology are reshaping the world, however, the United States cannot afford to be complacent.

The pace of policy movement--whether in arms control, international trade, or regional political issues--is less important than clarity of purpose. The Bush administration's economic response to the democratizing trend in Poland and Hungary, the rescinding of the no-exceptions rule on the transfer of technology to the Soviet Union, the recent conventional arms initiative, and the President's stated preference for going "beyond containment" are hopeful signs of a nascent policy predisposition to respond to Soviet behavior in ways that will shape the contours of a post-Yalta system. The challenge for U.S. policymakers is to conceive each of these policy lines as coherent elements of a strategic vision rather than as piecemeal, tactical responses to a dynamic situation.

The different political and military realities in Asia and Europe, however, render a global response to Gorbachev's Eurasian strategy a difficult undertaking. In contrast to Soviet behavior towards Europe, Moscow's actions in Asia display substantial continuity with past policies; the gap between Soviet rhetoric and reality is sizeable. Given the slow pace of perestroika, upon which the integration of the eastern USSR into the Pacific Rim economy is contingent, and the political impediments to unilateral Soviet concessions, it appears unlikely that the political-security environment in the Pacific will be altered dramatically in the near future. Indeed, it might be argued that Gorbachev's efforts to transpose new security thinking in Europe to Asia represent a serious miscalculation.

The strategic peculiarities of Asia--a diverse and unconnected rather than a clearly defined, contiguous landmass, a multipolar rather than bipolar balance of power--make the perceived Soviet threat there one of many in the region. As is the case in Europe, the practical effect of the peacetime U.S. military presence in the Pacific is to maintain the balance of power in the area. But the rise of new power centers--Japan, China, India-- will increase the importance of the American balancing role in the region in the foreseeable future. While the exigencies of budgetary pressures, mounting Asian nationalism, and the changing Soviet threat will undoubtedly require adjustments in the

form, if not the substance, of the U.S. presence in the Pacific, it is difficult to envision the kind of force reductions that now appear possible in Europe. Nonetheless, in Asia as in Europe, the U.S. policy response to Soviet-induced change is more likely to serve the national interest if it reflects a holistic vision of the emerging post-Yalta system of international relations and America's role in it.

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